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scorched farms reach far up into the green heights, to the scene of activity of a nomadic race. This exists here today in the heart of Europe, for the peasant of the Bregenz forests has remained a wandering shepherd despite all the developments of civilisation. He spends the winter in close companionship with his neighbours in the village, but as soon as the snow is finally gone from the mountains and the pastures on their slopes are beginning to turn green again, he moves off with family, goods and chattels to the "Maisäss", or "May residence", a solitary farm which is situated halfway between the valley and the Alps. In summer the peasant drives his flocks and herds up the Alps, most of the other members of his family returning to the valley to work in the fields and harvest the hay. If, at the end of summer, pasture at the highest levels becomes too scanty, he and his family return to the Maisäss until here also the approach of cold weather makes the pasturage too meagre. Only then does the family occupy its quarters in the valley. With such a system it is not surprising that even large villages present an almost lifeless appearance at certain times of the year.

The church at Schwarzenberg well repays the art lover for a visit. The village, which has nowadays made a name for itself as a winter-sport and holiday centre was the second home of the well-known painter Angelika Kauffmann. 361

In conclusion, among the notable peculiarities of the Bregenzerwald the so-called "Bezegg Column" must not be forgotten, that symbolic monument which recalls the former council-house of the staunchly independent and democratic peasants and artisans of the Bregenzerwald. This building could only be entered by a ladder which was removed as soon as the councillors had assembled and was not put back until the questions to be discussed had all been cleared up. This steadfast democratic spirit together with the commercial activity of its population is Vorarlberg's most valuable contribution to its great Austrian homeland. 344